



ILA-USMX JOINT SAFETY COMMITTEE

OSH Circular 2017-11 (10 November 2017)

Safe Stacking of Containers



Intermodal containers are designed and constructed to conform to the specifications set out within global (international) standards. They're known as ISO standards. Those ISO standards build a great deal of strength into a container's floor and corner posts, but not nearly as much strength into its sides, ends or top (roof).

As a result, when containers are stacked it's extremely important to arrange them in a way that allows the forces imposed by their weight(s) to be distributed vertically, through the corner posts down through the floor. Relying upon top rails (*see photo to the left*) to support the loads imposed by any number of stacked containers will eventually lead to collapse, accidents and injuries to longshore workers.

Those consequences can be avoided by stacking corner-fitting-to-corner-fitting at each of the four corners; each and every time.

With the arrival of ships carrying many thousands of containers, the likelihood of transitionally taller and taller container stacks at marine terminals becomes almost inevitable.

On their own, the heights of those stacks increase the potential for accidents and make it so that workers and managers must ensure that stacks are constructed ***carefully and professionally***. Build those stacks with great care, taking the time that's necessary to do it right; each and every time. Lives depend upon it!

Got an OSH-related question? Write to the JSC at: blueoceana@optonline.net

Working Together For The Benefit Of All

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